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EXHIBIT 3
DATE 2-8-07
HB 553

MONTANA ADVOCACY PROGRAM, INC.

The Civil Rights Protection & Advocacy System for the State of Montana

February 9, 2007

The Hon. Rep. Scott Mendenhall, Chair
House Business and Labor Committee

In support of HB 553, choice of rehabilitation services provider

Dear Rep. Mendenhall and Members of the Committee,

We strongly support the right of injured workers to their own choice of provider.

As an advocacy organization for people with disabilities, we appreciate the importance of self-determination to successful outcomes for people whose lives have been changed by a disability. Getting a disability means having to start over, and it takes a lot of strength and determination to put the pieces of a life back together again. The power to make a choice as basic as where to go to get rehabilitation services is an essential element of self-determination.


Patients who can choose their own providers also know that they are equal partners in a treatment team. They are prepared to trust and cooperate with the professionals who will intrude upon their privacy and dignity. Patients who feel coerced and powerless respond poorly to treatment.

Family involvement during every aspect of treatment is also critical to recovery. Involved families become educated about the disability. They are in a better position to partner with the patient to help him achieve his goals, and they are less likely to have attitudes that are harmful, like the blaming the person for limitations created by the disability. Marriage and family unity often don't survive the arrival of disability. Patients who can't choose an accessible provider lose a lot.

Choice of provider is a basic tenet of good medical care. Denying that to injured workers doesn't make sense for patients, their families or even their providers, and it is bad state policy.

Thank you very much for considering these remarks.

Yours truly,


Anita Roessmann
Staff Attorney

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